



Jan. 22, 2010

This Week

- 2009 Ridership Stats
- WSDOT Senior Managers Meeting
- WA State Transportation Commission Presentation
- Kudos to WSF Employee

2009 Ridership Stats

I want to report on the ridership statistics for 2009. Ridership for 2009 was steady on our 22 vessels and 10 routes covering 200 miles of marine highway. For the year, we carried nearly 23 million riders and just over 10 million vehicles which mirrored our ridership in 2008. We view maintaining our ridership numbers as good news in this economic downturn. You can find the entirety of the 2009 ridership report online at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/traffic_stats/.

Some highlights, when compared with 2008 ridership, include:

- Even though Edmonds/Kingston lost 30 percent of its traffic in May due to the temporary closure of the Hood Canal Bridge, ridership on the route was up overall.
- During the summer months, vehicle use was up 1.1 percent and there was overall growth on our recreational routes. We attribute this increase in recreational traffic to the “staycationers” or those choosing to spend their vacation near home as opposed to more distant travel destinations.
- Commute travel declined on our central sound routes – Bainbridge/Seattle, Bremerton/Seattle and Edmonds/Kingston; however, overall ridership was up on Edmonds/Kingston.
- Ridership increased on our north sound routes - Mukilteo/Clinton and Port Townsend/Keystone - and in the San Juan Islands.
- There was a 17 percent decline in large commercial vehicles (over 50 feet). We would like to see the commercial traffic on our routes increase since it is an important source of revenue for the ferry system. Commercial traffic is also a baseline of regional economic growth, and their use of our services is generally during off-peak travel times which is compatible with our other customers.

I believe that vehicle reservations are a way to help grow ridership in key areas and give our customers certainty about their travel times. As proposed in the Vehicle Reservations System Predesign Study, which can be found at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/planning/vehiclereservations.htm, the preferred alternative includes upgrading our existing vehicle reservations systems and focusing first on commercial reservations and bringing reservations to the San Juan Islands. I look forward to the Legislature’s decision on how to proceed with vehicle reservations and its potentially positive impact on system ridership.

WSDOT Senior Managers Meeting

On Tuesday, WSDOT held its quarterly meeting with senior management. We discussed department-wide issues and I presented on the Vehicle Reservations System Predesign Study, Fuel Cost Mitigation Plan and vessel construction status and naming.

Washington State Transportation Commission Presentation

I presented the final Vehicle Reservations System Predesign Study to the Washington State Transportation Commission on Thursday. We anticipate discussions on the study this session and look forward to legislative direction on how to proceed. The study is available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/planning/vehiclereservations.htm.

Kudos to WSF Employee

I would like to share my appreciation for WSF Terminal Attendant Sia Tuimauga who prevented a customer from

falling into the water at Colman Dock Wednesday evening. Sia was leaving her shift when she noticed a woman in distress and provided assistance until the authorities arrived. Sia has been with the ferry system since 1993.

Next Week:

- Presentation for the Senate Transportation Committee

David Moseley's weekly updates are available on the WSDOT Ferries Division Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/weekly.

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